Australian Bureau of Statistics

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Number of industrial disputes during 1997 lowest since 1940

There were 447 industrial disputes reported in Australia in 1997, 96 less than the previous year and the lowest for a calendar year since 1940 according to data released today by the Australian Bureau of Statistics.

The number of employees involved in industrial disputation during 1997 decreased by 45 per cent over the preceding 12 months (577,700 to 315,400). The main States contributing to the overall decrease in employees involved in disputes were New South Wales (201,500 to 72,700) and Queensland (151,600 to 65,800).

Nationally, the number of working days lost decreased by 42 per cent, from 928,500 in 1996 to 534,200 in 1997. All States and Territories, except Western Australia recorded decreases in working days lost.

New South Wales reported a decrease of 59 per cent, from 377,900 working days lost in 1996 to 153,700 in 1997. This is New South Wales' lowest estimate for a calendar year since 1933 when the figure was 53,100. Western Australia recorded a moderate rise in working days lost, from 47,300 in 1996 to 60,100 in 1997.

The Manufacturing industry reported 145,600 working days lost in 1997 or 27 per cent of the all industries total. Other industries that reported a large number of working days lost were Construction (107,800), Coal mining (95,700) and Education; Health and community services (94,000).

At the national level, there were 75 working days lost per thousand employees in 1997, a decrease from the 131 recorded in 1996 and the lowest annual calendar year estimate since the statistical measure was first compiled in 1967. States that recorded rates above or around the national average in 1997 for working days lost per thousand employees were Victoria (118), Western Australia (85) and Queensland (71).

On an industry basis, the highest rates of working days lost per thousand employees were recorded in Coal mining (4,206), Construction (290), Metal product; Machinery and equipment manufacturing (189) and Other manufacturing (107).

Details are in **Industrial Disputes, Australia, 1997** (cat. no. 6322.0) available from ABS Bookshops.

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